

Is It Permitted to Purchase a Building That Has an Existing Church Inside It?

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Question: In cases where it would be forbidden to rent to a house of *avodah zara*, would it be permitted to purchase a multiunit property that already has an existing church?

Answer: If the church is in the middle of a lease, you may purchase the property and allow them to stay there for the remainder of the lease. The reason for this is, the church is locked into the property for the remainder of the lease, and cannot be evicted until the lease is up no matter who owns the building. Since they would be in the property until the end of the lease no matter if the seller keeps the building or sells it to someone else, it cannot be said that the buyer is enabling them in any way.

A problem does come up, however, when the lease ends and comes up for renewal. Renewing the lease would be just like renting it to them anew, and all the halachos of renting a property to a church would apply. Accordingly, if the property provides the church with any benefit they couldn't easily find elsewhere, it would be forbidden to renew the lease.

For this reason, I advise anyone buying such a property to make a note and set some sort of reminder to ask a *shailoh* regarding what to do when the lease is up.